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House of Representatives

Securing Our Borders & Tightening The Noose On Perpetrators Of Senseless Violence

OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, February 10, 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Poe) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, just last October, FBI agents, in cooperation with Baytown, Texas, and LaPorte, Texas, police, both law enforcement departments in my district, shattered a major document forgery operation being run out of a trailer house just across the street from the massive Exxon Mobile Refinery in Baytown, Texas. The result: six men were arrested and charged with numerous Federal counts of conspiracy and producing false documents, including Texas driver's licenses, resident alien cards, and industrial safety training cards used for employment in the strategic petrochemical industry.

The REAL ID Act that our Chamber passed today was a sensible first step toward desperately needed immigration reform in the United States. Still, however, in order to truly construct a watertight system, we cannot, when legislating here in Congress, just hitch our wagon to the newest pony when we have a solid team of stallions sitting around with nothing to do. Before discussion of any new proposals or their benefits, we must first ensure the laws currently on the books are being enforced. We must expect people from other nations to respect our borders.

Not only is it essential that we enforce existing laws; we must also reduce the incentives we offer foreigners to come to our country illegally. CNN reported a short time after the forgery bust I just mentioned that precious American dollars are being hijacked on unreimbursed medical care and education for illegal aliens who, in the darkness of the night, manage to come across our borders.

Have Texas and other border States merely become free HMOs for illegals, with Americans, many of whom do not even have their own medical care, paying the cost?

Similarly, in the Washington Times, they had an article dealing with the invasion of illegal immigrants and the exorbitant cost to taxpayers in the health care and prison areas. It was reported that one in every four uninsured people in the United States is illegal. Moreover, its study revealed that in 2000 alone States like Texas, which are on the Mexican border, have losses in almost \$190 million in unreimbursed costs for treating illegals, with an additional \$113 million in ambulance fees and follow-up medical services.

Mr. Speaker, why, as unintentionally as it may be, are we rewarding brazen lawlessness? During my tenure on the bench as a felony court judge in Houston, Texas, I can recall that approximately 15 to 20 percent of the criminals I sentenced in my court for the most serious felony crimes were illegal immigrants. And while these individuals were doing time in the penitentiary, Texans, Americans no less, were once again paying the price for their incarceration.

Americans pay for the illegal immigration. Americans always pay. As that noted scholar Pogo once said: "We have found the enemy, and it is us." I believe, though, as we continue to heed vital lessons from the tragedy of the September 11 attacks on our soil, that we are making progress in securing our borders from unlawful immigration, while tightening the noose of the perpetrators of senseless violence and terror who harm our citizens.

I commend the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. Sensenbrenner), chairman of the House Committee on the Judiciary; the gentleman from California (Mr. Cox), chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee; and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Tom Davis), chairman of the Committee on Government Reform, for their leadership towards these collective goals.